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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [CY](#) [EU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKISH PM ERDOGAN'S TRIP TO NORTHERN CYPRUS:
DOMESTIC SUCCESS; DID ANYONE ELSE HEAR?

REF: A. NICOSIA 1099
[1](#)B. ANKARA 4133

Classified By: Political Counselor Janice Weiner, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Turkish PM Erdogan trekked to the "TRNC" July 19 with a heavyweight delegation (six ministers and 20 parliamentarians) for a three-day visit to mark the 32nd anniversary of the Turks' 1974 intervention. This first visit of a Turkish PM to the island in eight years was intended, per Turkish MFA Cyprus department head Huseyin Muftuoglu, to send several messages:

--to Turkish Cypriots (TCs) to ensure them that whatever happens, Turkey will stand by them;

--to Greek Cypriots (GCs), to let them know Turkey continues to support a UN-brokered solution and will support TC efforts in this regard; and

--to the EU, to emphasize that it should make good on its promise to end TC isolation.

[1](#)2. (C) Erdogan personally helped design the trip, Muftuoglu stated, to reach out as effectively as possible to the most aggrieved TCs. He signaled this by the length of the trip, the seniority of the delegation and locations chosen to visit. It was underscored by the PM's roadtrip (2-1/2 hours by car each way) to Karpas, an impoverished area at the tip of the "dagger", and by the ribbon cutting for a road from Nicosia (Lefkosa) to Guzelyurt, which, under the Annan Plan, would have reverted in part to the GCs. The PM further emphasized Turkey's continued economic support by signing an agreement for renewed economic assistance for 2007-2009 in the amount of \$360 million/year in aid.

[1](#)3. (C) In his speeches, the Turkish PM underscored continued support for a UN final settlement process. The watch words continued to be bizonal, bicomunal and political equality. In a television interview, Muftuoglu said, Erdogan agreed that the earlier GC 2004 rejection of the Annan Plan meant that it was legally null and void. The PM had added, however, that any new solution would have to proceed from a very similar basis.

[1](#)4. (C) MP Murat Mercan, from Erdogan's governing Justice and Development Party (AKP), traveled as part of the official delegation, and offered us a similar assessment of the visit. He reiterated that Turkey would not open its ports and airports to the Greek Cypriots until TC isolation is eased. Muftuoglu stressed that Erdogan truly believes the TCs have been left out in the cold; he is equally sincere that once isolation is lifted, Turkey would open ports and airports to GCs simultaneously. The TC populace as a whole - even Denktas supporters - believe Erdogan is on the right path, as does public opinion in Turkey across the political spectrum. EU support numbers in Turkey will go up, Muftuoglu concluded,

if the EU makes good on its trade promises to the TCs; for Turks and TCs, it is a matter of trust. TCs believe they were deceived.

15. (C) Comment: These are the messages Ankara hoped to deliver at home and abroad. The question is whether - and how - these messages were heard by the GOC and in Brussels. Erdogan may have delivered his message in a conciliatory manner, but he has effectively shored up domestic support and locked arms with Talat, making it even more difficult for the PM to ease back unless TC isolation eases.

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